

Revitalising DHC

Response to public consultation

The project team have reviewed the feedback from the public consultation (16.02.2026) before submitting the planning application on 12 March 2026.

Below are the main points raised at the consultation and received by email, and our response.

Q. Why can't you demolish the existing building and start afresh, or find a different location?

A. The cost of doing this is too high. We are choosing a financially realistic project using and extending an existing building.

Q. Was there an analysis of the needs of existing and future potential users?

A. A needs analysis for all user groups was carried-out, ie. Sea Scouts, CEDA and existing DHC users. As we have such a wide variety of existing users and know the specific needs of CEDA and the Sea Scouts, we are confident we are producing the best solution we can, within the budgetary and space constraints.

Q. Will it cost more to hire DHC after the improvements?

A. The hire charges for DHC (and Matthews Hall) will be reviewed on an annual basis to take account of ongoing costs, utilisation and inflation. There is no plan to specifically raise hire-charges to reflect the improved experience at DHC. Both venues remain community assets, run by TCA on behalf of the community.

Q. When will the public toilet be open?

A. It's too early to say at this point. Most likely the toilet will be open in line with café opening hours and the vary with the seasons but this is yet to be decided.

Q. Are there any plans to build/develop a Padel court on the existing boules court?

A. A new Padel court is not a feature of this project.

Q. Can there be more children's attractions in the vicinity of the hall/cafe?

A. The project team have taken this on-board to raise with Exeter City Council.

Q. What happens if there are timetable clashes between existing and new users (eg. the Scouts)?

A. The timetables were reviewed by the project team in a bid to avoid clashes with existing users.

Q. Is the proposed kitchenette big enough?

A. The architects have re-looked at the kitchen and made an adjustment so in the application, it's bigger, and accessible from both halls.

Q. Can there be a permanent cover outside to protect from the weather?

A. The architects have been asked to include this feature in the planning proposal so we have flexibility on what is delivered by the project; ie we will have the option to include a permanent cover but we will need to consider options and costs.

Q. Dogs are not currently allowed through the gate, won't this affect the proposed cafe?

A. We have considered fencing off the cafe outside area but it can make it too restrictive. We think keeping dogs on leads in the cafe area is probably the best option but can keep this under review.

Q. Could this project distract TCA from financial solvency and negatively affect Matthews Hall?

A. TCA believe this project will enhance profitability as it will make DHC a more attractive venue to hire. The proposed cafe should bring in new income too. There are separate plans being developed for Matthews Hall to support it's future and financial solvency.